"Lost Children," a Working Mother, and the Progess of an Artist at the Florentine Misericordia in the Trecento

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The Compagnia di Santa Maria della Misericordia in Florence has been the subject of a number of specialized studies for more than two centuries and over the same period has been mentioned countless times in more general works on Florentine society (Fig. 1).[1] Of uncertain age, this confraternity, prominently situated across the street from the great Cathedral and its Baptistry, was apparently among the first of many such groups in the city composed of laypersons who banded together voluntarily for specific purposes, usually devotional. In addition, virtually all scholars have remarked on how, from its earliest days, the Misericordia provided charitable services not only to its own members but to any and all needy persons who came to its attention. Acting in this way, the company brethren were guided generally by the canonical Six Works of Mercy enjoined by Christ Himself (Matt. 25.35-36), plus the commonly added non-biblical seventh work, burial of the dead. Recently, however, the paucity of evidence supporting this observation has been pointed out. Indeed, one might logically conclude that these scholars have taken a somewhat romantic view of the early history of the Misericordia, which encompasses not only the fourteenth century but perhaps much of the thirteenth as well. Not one of them has produced the requisite, substantial, documentary proof verifying that the company aided non-members as a matter of course prior to its refounding late in the fifteenth century, when it explicitly took up the task of ensuring proper Christian burial for all, including those persons otherwise unable to afford it.[2] This paper seeks to establish that as early as the trecento the Misericordia in fact did perform at least one service indispensable to an early-modern urban center such as Florence: the care of defenseless children, including abandoned children and orphans. While a previous study by the author makes the case for this on art-

historical grounds, describing in the process the historical situation which necessitated this activity, the probable *modus operandi* of the confraternity, and the difficult problems it faced in this regard, this essay will approach the issue on the basis of the archival record, confirming and refining one of the suggestions made therein: that a home for parentless children existed inside the company headquarters.[3] In consequence of this, the record firmly establishes why those aspects of the Misericordia's artistic program addressed in the earlier study were commissioned just when they were. Certain documents, moreover, make it necessary to re-examine, and probably reattribute, a fresco that was one of the works of art discussed—an assessment corroborated by stylistic analysis—for those documents yield surprising new information concerning one of the artists responsible for it. As a result, that artist, Ambrogio di Baldese, about whom precious little has been known to date, emerges as a more tangible personality, an individual with specific motivations and reactions. Observed in this context, elements of his painting style and the principal direction of his professional career can now be clarified.

Passerini's Evidence Considered

In his fundamental, mid-nineteenth-century study of Florentine philanthropic organizations, Luigi Passerini discussed briefly the evidence, solid or otherwise, supporting his conviction that by the fourteenth century the Misericordia company was involved in the care of parentless children.[4] More recent scholars have been careful to include under this general term both orphans—minors without living parents—and innocents, including infant foundlings, abandoned permanently or temporarily by their parents for any of a number of reasons: poverty, illegitimacy, the child's disability, military crisis, epidemic disease, the incapacity (or unwillingness) of single parents to care for their offspring, or simply because the child happened to be female.[5] Passerini based his belief in the early Misericordia's active role regarding children primarily on various entries in the three earliest extant manuscripts that contain the deliberations of the company captains, catalogued in the Archivio di Stato in Florence as Bigallo, vol. 2, fascicules 1-3, which include minutes of the officers' meetings from 1349-51, 1358-66, and 1385-1412 (Florentine style), respectively.[6] For one thing, he noted in a general way a handful of entries recording monthly payments to certain artisans residing throughout the city without indication as to why they were paid. Passerini suggested that these stipends represented compensation for those craftsmen who accepted as apprentices in their

workshops parentless children handed over to them by the Misericordia. In addition, he cited a communal statute requiring the city's inhabitants to bring unsupervised children either to the Misericordia headquarters on the Piazza del Duomo or to the Piazza di Or San Michele, where they could be consigned to the proper communal officials; it was further stipulated that residents who came across such children but did not hand them over within twenty-four hours would be punished as thieves if caught.[7]

In truth, both of these alleged pieces of evidence regarding the company's work with parentless children must be judged tenuous. Passerini mentioned the payments to artisans without reference to individual examples. Moreover, that these payments were intended to compensate tradesmen entrusted with youthful wards of the Misericordia is merely a presumption. It ignores the possibility that in these cases the company was acting as trustee for deceased testators, a role it played frequently, appointed to dole out regular support money to persons named as heirs in wills that are no longer traceable. Alternatively, the persons thus named may have been simply those who, for whatever reason, were chosen by the captains to benefit from their periodic alms distributions, mentioned so often in their books of deliberations.[8] And Passerini's second piece of evidence, the communal statute mandating the consignment of guardianless children, was enacted only in 1557. He did not realize this and thus offered no proof that such a law, or even a custom upon which the sixteenth-century statute was based, existed back in the trecento. Moreover, in itself the law says nothing about the by-then-altered status of the confraternal premises or the role of the members of the company, past or present; rather, it only mentions the place where they (formerly) convened as a group.[9]

Problematic though these two supposed testimonies to early Misericordia involvement with children are, neither can be discounted entirely as parts of a continuing pattern, and indeed, two other pieces of documentary evidence presented by Passerini tend to bolster his claim. A petition of 9 January 1365 (Florentine style) written by the head of the Camaldolese monks of San Salvatore in Florence expresses their common desire to associate with the Misericordia. Specifically, the monks requested permission to dedicate the choir chapel in their new church, currently being decorated, to Santa Maria della Misericordia and therein to display the name of the company and its coat of arms. Furthermore, the monks wished the confraternity to include their high altar among those from which the Misericordia brethren randomly se-

lected the site at which to celebrate their annual

> Mass of the Foundlings, on the [Feast] Day of the Lady St. Lucy, so that the convent of the said monastery and its benefactors, living and dead, may be participants in the spiritual goods which are dispensed and will be dispensed by your company, and *similarly* that those of the company may be participants [in the spiritual goods] of the said monastery.

That same day the Misericordia acceded to the request.[10] While this exchange seems to bear out Passerini's contention, even here the evidence might be challenged, for although the archival volumes he consulted repeatedly mention preparations for the company's annual observance of the Feast of St. Lucy, those deliberations never again refer to children but only to Masses for the Dead recited in commemoration of past confraternal members and benefactors.[11]

Passerini's assumption would appear to rest on firmer ground when considering a fourth piece of information that he presented in a different context. In a deliberation of 20 February 1407 (Florentine style), the Misericordia decided that a company notary would henceforth maintain a register, ordered according to the different administrative *quartieri* of the city, containing the names of all children baptized in the Florentine Baptistry located across the street from the confraternity's headquarters. Previously, just numbers had been recorded, and only on an annual basis, the totals set down by the officiating priest according to the sex of the children on whom the sacrament was conferred, as attested to by the chronicler Giovanni Villani.[12] As for the law of 1557 mentioned above that required the delivery of stray children to communal officials posted at the Misericordia, again one might wonder if this further task, apparently self-appointed, was a logical extension into the early quattrocento of charitable work undertaken previously by the company on behalf of children. On the other hand, the decision to keep a baptismal register may have been a first-time response by the Misericordia to some new governmental mandate, a purely practical, civic-minded action engendered by the company's location so conveniently close to the one place in Florence where the rite of baptism was celebrated.[13]

Additional Archival Evidence

In spite of the doubts expressed here, these four items, taken together, do point toward Passerini's conclusion that, early on, the care

for needy children was an important expression of the Misericordia's desire to serve the Florentine populace. Moreover, the archival volumes he examined, and others, too, provide further justification for his claim. Admittedly, due to the near total lack of surviving records from the first half of the fourteenth century, one cannot be sure how active at that time the Misericordia was in this regard. But the doc*umentary* record begins to fill out around the middle of the century, and it establishes beyond question that, for one thing, the administration of dowries became one of the company's major concerns during the *later* trecento. There are dozens of references to varying sums of money donated by the company to poor girls so that they might wed, or held in trust by it for the daughters of testators, to be dispensed at the time of marriage or upon entering a convent (and thus marrying Christ).[14] Of course, this is only to be expected of an organization which itself benefitted greatly from the high mortality rates that so often left children without parents during those years of repeated epidemics, which swept Florence and its environs first in 1340 and then regularly and with increased vehemence beginning with the Black Death of 1348.[15] Notable, too, are those entries in the early books of deliberations, as well as clauses in the texts of wills found in other volumes, that name the Misericordia as fiduciary and chronicle its efforts in this capacity. They make it clear that assignors trusted the company to act on behalf of their progeny, many presumably young, whom they made heirs, or at least beneficiaries, of their estates. To these children were left possessions and parcels of real estate (and sometimes cash) administered—or at any rate regarded with calculated self-interest—by the confraternity. In due time ownership would pass to the offspring as specified, and then in turn to their successors; alternatively, such properties were to be enjoyed in usufruct for stipulated periods.[16]

A unique document recording three payments to an apothecary named Stagio Barducci may have bearing on why the Misericordia subsequently became involved in keeping accurate baptismal records, as referred to above, and may suggest something further. Predating the confraternity's assumption of that office by over a quarter-century, Barducci received on 22 April 1379 three *lire* and five *soldi* in exchange for his consignment of five pounds of candles in several installments beginning the previous August. A second payment of one *lira* and six *soldi* was made on 24 December 1379 for two more pounds of candles, turned over to the company on 16 August and 17 November. And on 7 December 1380 Barducci was paid four *lire* and twelve *soldi* for seven (?) additional pounds of candles, again delivered incre-

mentally to the Misericordia beginning on 16 November of the previous year. Significant here are the explanations attached to each payment, that the candles were to be used: "to hold at the baptism for poor children and for [the] entombment of some soldier," "for the above-stated reason," and "to hold at the baptism for poor children and for [the] deceased poor."[17] While certainty as to the intent of these three entries is lacking, they make sense when considered in connection with what four recent studies have established regarding the importance of baptism to the overseers of hospices that sheltered abandoned children and orphans. Upon delivery of a child to an institution of this sort, it was customary for a "sign" (especially salt) or note to be left indicating whether or not he or she had been baptized.[18] Without this sacrament, of course, it was believed that the child would remain stained by original sin, with no hope of eventual redemption and eternal life in Christ. Thus, it was incumbent upon the hospice authorities to have any unbaptized child baptized immediately, an action that took on added urgency in view of the shockingly high number of deaths that habitually plagued those institutions.[19] Placed in this context, it is tempting to interpret the "poor children" of the Barducci document, baptized under the aegis of the Misericordia, as youngsters of precisely this type, and to understand that the members of the confraternity, in taking up this task, did so in purposeful imitation of those persons who directed full-fledged children's hospices.

In fact, the tragedy of infant and child mortality that occurred in homes specifically intended for abandoned children and orphans was probably all too familiar to the fourteenth-century Misericordia, as intimated once more by the archival record. An unpublished inventory of 19 February 1368 (Florentine style) lists, room by room, possessions of the confraternity found in its headquarters. Among those stored in the ill-defined "*fondachetto* where the [company] captains meet" were "five sacks with covers to bury the poor, abandoned dead." In a loft above the entrance were kept three more covers used for burials. Although in neither case is it entirely clear for whom these makeshift shrouds were intended, considered together with the other pieces of circumstantial evidence assembled here, it is by no means impossible that at least some of those poor and homeless deceased were just the sorts of children for whom the Misericordia increasingly intervened. In addition, the inventory lists the utilitarian contents of a kitchen that was probably located on the upper floor of the headquarters, while other utensils used for the preparation and consumption of food were stored in a second loft evidently situated above the kitchen.[20] If the seat

of the Misericordia had been merely a place for its members to meet and worship together, it is unlikely that either mantles earmarked for use in burying the abandoned poor or a well-equipped kitchen on the premises would have been necessary or even present. Indeed, that the structures comprising the company's administrative center—mainly a residence building and a combined oratory and loggia with a meeting room upstairs—actually contained some sort of rudimentary accommodations for the needy appears all the more likely from two further bits of previously unpublished documentary evidence. At the height of the Black Death, a certain Giovanni di Nanni Faracini, resident in the parish of San Felice in Piazza, declared in his will of 21 June 1348: "I leave to the company of the Misericordia, or rather to the hospital and [the] poor of that [organization], [my] inheritance."[21] Given the interchangeability of the terms "hospital" and "hospice" in that era, the point of reference here is quite possibly identical to that in a deliberation of the company captains on 26 March 1386 that set aside just over ten florins "for the painters and images and many other things done in the hospice and house (i.e., residence) of the Misericordia."[22] While neither source specifies what kind of benevolent refuge the confraternity was running, they make it clear that the company did maintain one. And considered alongside the other evidence presented here, these two notices tend to support the conclusion that that facility, such as it was, was located at the headquarters of the confraternity itself and served—partially, in any case—to house and care for defenseless children who at least temporarily lacked other means of support.

The Fresco of 1386 on the Misericordia Facade

Despite a discrepancy in the amount of money reserved by the captains for salaries, the document of 26 March 1386 is probably to be considered in conjunction with a subsequent entry appearing ten pages later in the same volume of deliberations. Published first by Passerini, and then by other scholars on several occasions, this document, dated 5 July 1386, records payment "to Niccolò di Pietro [Gerini] and Ambrogio di Baldese, painters, on the twenty-second day of June, for the rest of the job of painting the front face of the house (i.e., residence) of the Misericordia, seventeen gold florins."[23] The work of art referred to, employed by Passerini to introduce his discussion of the efforts of the Misericordia on behalf of parentless children, is certainly the fresco most fully and correctly titled *The Consignment of Abandoned Children and Orphans to Natural and Adoptive Mothers* (Fig.

2). Today only the central portion survives, incorporated into the south wall of the audience hall inside the Misericordia residence. There it is displayed together with a small watercolor copy recording most of its original appearance, made prior to the destructive removal of the fresco from the building exterior in 1777.[24] In different vignettes, according to early guidebooks, the fresco represented to the Florentine populace both the grief of some young mothers standing outside the company headquarters in distress over the loss of their children, and the joy of others reclaiming theirs from the Misericordia brethren—plus, one suspects, the happiness of still others who are accepting supervision over children not their own. Collectively the guidebooks call all the small children in the fresco—babies held in the arms of the young women as well as slightly older ones standing by themselves—"fanciulli smarriti," and in fact these are the very words used to describe their living counterparts in several much older documents of the confraternity, in both Italian and Latin, discussed later in this article. To be sure, "smarrito" may best be translated as "lost" or "disappeared." Certainly, one can easily imagine that the *fanciulli smarriti* in the painting represent in part young people who had strayed from their adult companions amid the crowded streets and marketplaces of Florence, and, to be precise, such is the implication of the words used in the 1557 city ordinance mentioned above ("boys and girls wandering without guardian"). Yet it has been shown that while all too many children in that era vanished from their families for varying amounts of time, most of these, as the author has affirmed elsewhere, were decidedly not "kidnap victims or venturesome youths who had [merely] wandered off." Rather, the children referred to probably included those who had been subjected to difficult, even desperate situations at home and who as a result were abandoned by parents or, if deceased, surviving relatives. Very often infants or toddlers, they were lost in the sense that they disappeared from their homes for some time, entrusted by their families to organizations such as the Misericordia if only on a provisional basis. When the hard times passed, the more fortunate among them were taken back. The unluckier ones, turned out by their families permanently and left homeless in the care of some charitable institution with or without means of identification, were effectively reduced to the status of orphans. Almost surely, then, in this context the term "fanciulli smarriti"—lost children—was in large part nothing more than a euphemism denoting minors willfully set loose from their households.[25]

Although its original placement has been disputed, written and pictorial testimony postdating the execution of the fresco, as well as a

reasonably accurate estimate of its original dimensions, strongly suggest that it was located on the north facade of the Misericordia headquarters just above the wide, perennially open doorway that formerly led into the residence audience hall (Fig. 3). This doorway, it should be noted, was most likely the spot where true orphans and other minors entered into the care of the Misericordia.[26] Moreover, the entrance and the fresco above it faced the Baptistry across the street, wherein newly accepted children could be cleansed of original sin. Positioned thus, *The Consignment* offered a cheering prospect to all those participating in an otherwise unhappy and discouraging scenario. It assured them that the ill-favored children deposited into the foster care of the confraternity would be looked after benignly and conscientiously, while birthparents recuperated from their sunken fortunes sufficiently to reclaim their offspring and new parents were sought for innocents left homeless.[27] The fact that during the trecento two major institutions for such children existed in Florence—the Hospital of San Gallo and the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala—and that the Company of Or San Michele legally protected and financially assisted them, especially during the last half of that century (at the end of which responsibility for legal aid passed largely to the government), does not diminish the declarative power of this fresco proclaiming the role of the Misericordia. Rather, it reinforces the conjecture made elsewhere as to the precise nature of that role: that the confraternity, in carrying out its mission toward children, necessarily worked with those other organizations, sharing information and resources while serving as both a collection point and a "holding bay" to provide basic, short-term care for at least some of the city's abandoned and orphaned youngsters.[28] Periodically, according to much later reports, members of the company exhibited and offered them to the public from the oratory loggia for three days at a time, an otherwise undocumented practice that seems to be represented in the Gerini-Baldese fresco.[29] Only those children who repeatedly went unclaimed were probably sent on to one of the two larger hospices for more permanent accommodation.

In the literature of art, *The Consignment* has been employed mainly to gauge the stylistic development of the two painters responsible for it. At a deeper level, the question of style is relevant here—as is so often the case in the study of art—in that it may provide personal context to the fresco to shed light on the mentality and outlook of those who made it, just as a full understanding of the painting's subject and original location, setting it within its institutional framework, has illuminated the intentions of the patron. By the late fourteenth century,

invention and individuality of expression among Italian, especially Florentine, painters and sculptors was accepted, even prized, to a degree almost unthinkable a century earlier—this, despite the still-potent limitations imposed by the traditional system of apprenticeship, in which not just technique but general canons of style continued to be passed on from master to pupil, generation after generation. More and more, stylistic traits distinguishing workshops within the same regional school, and even differentiating hands within single *botteghe*, manifested themselves. This development finds its parallel in the ever greater number of names of artists recorded on finished works of art and, as in the case of the Misericordia fresco, in contracts and other archival sources, too. Of course, an isolated instance of stylistic inventiveness within the total body of work of one artist is by definition an aberration and would seem to result from conscious choice, a pointed effort by that artist to meet the desires of a particular patron for a specific commission. But when an artist's entire body of work presents a consistent, individually expressive language, it more likely represents a response by the artist to his or her life experiences, and a true measure of his or her soul. The question here, then, is this: reading beyond the impartial wording in the record of payment of 5 July 1386, can principal responsibility for *The Consignment of Abandoned Children and Orphans to Natural and Adoptive Mothers* convincingly be assigned to either Niccolò di Pietro Gerini or Ambrogio di Baldese on the basis of its style? For if it can, the painting may be a key affording access into the personal life of that individual. In fact, the style of the fresco is consonant with that of only one of the two artists reimbursed for it and stands as a reflection of the man—Ambrogio di Baldese—who painted it. He alone of the pair, as will be shown subsequently, not only enjoyed a long-standing professional rapport with the company of the Misericordia but, significantly, participated in its work with needy children.

Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, the artist mentioned first in the payment document of 1386, is a name well known to students of Florentine Gothic painting. Although there exist a number of panels and frescoes which can be securely associated with him, opinion regarding the extent of his *oeuvre* and of his role in individual projects fluctuates from one scholar to another due to his penchant for collaboration with other artists, as in the case of the Misericordia fresco.[30] In spite of such academic skirmishing, by sifting through the visual evidence, certain generalizations regarding his style can be made. A masterful craftsman with a sure sense for brilliant, glowing color, Gerini's devotional paintings are nonetheless unusually hard and severe in both design and feel

ing, even by the standards of the late trecento. More to the point here, his narrative works are characterized by a similar stasis, both compositional and figural, inhabited by characters who are locked into position and incapable of reacting expressively.[31]

The fresco in question here, well preserved despite indignities suffered through long exposure and subsequent transferral, is obviously quite different. The colors are toned down and beautifully coordinated, with complementary reds and greens dominating. The overall composition undulates from figure to figure, from group to group, with soft, curvilinear rhythms that pulsate slowly across the surface. The fanciful background, which fuses imaginary elements with real details of the Florentine cityscape (including the Cathedral facade and the Misericordia itself), echoes this easy flow while allowing the human drama before it to prevail. And the figures themselves, especially the children and the young women who have come for them, are defined without the harsh contours, schematic drapery folds, and deep shadows that normally characterize Gerini's art. Instead, they as well as the company captains dressed in red at the center, who orchestrate the benevolent scene from inside their loggia, move and gesture gracefully and communicate among themselves with endearing expressions aptly suited to the subject represented.

It is true that the style of *The Consignment* may be one of those aberrations referred to above in the life work of this particular artist, intended to accommodate a specific patron. Yet while Gerini surely had a role in the general design of the fresco, it is so different from what one can judge of his style elsewhere that his collaborator Ambrogio di Baldese appears far more likely to be the artist primarily responsible for its execution. In fact, modern art-historical opinion on which of the two artists exercised the guiding hand here is about evenly split; earlier scholars, including Sirèn and van Marle, favored Ambrogio, while subsequent observers—Berenson, Boskovits, and the present author—gave the nod to Niccolò Gerini.[32] Recently, Alessandro Guidotti has revived the former opinion.[33] The problem of defining Ambrogio di Baldese's artistic personality is, if anything, more difficult than unravelling that of Gerini. While there is no dearth of archival references from which to trace his career—documents indicate that he worked mostly for corporate entities in Florence: governmental, commercial, and especially confraternal—virtually nothing of the numerous frescoes and panels mentioned therein survives.[34] The problem is compounded by two additional factors. First, according to these same documents, Ambrogio di Baldese, like Gerini, made a habit of working alongside other art-

ists.[35] Therefore, any existing work attributed to him may well bear the imprint of some other artist(s) as well. Second, critical opinion has been unable entirely to disengage the paintings attributed to Ambrogio from a stylistically related body of work commonly ascribed to a younger, anonymous artist called the Pseudo-Ambrogio di Baldese, who may or may not be identical with one of the several documented painters proposed by scholars.[36]

The difficulty in defining Ambrogio's style, owing to the lack of surviving works unquestionably by him, is perhaps best illustrated by Miklòs Boskovits's worthy, but in the end, rather forced attempt. Boskovits's discussion took as its point of departure an entire group of early-quattrocento fresco fragments in a Florentine guildhall that, he assigned to Ambrogio on the basis of a single document commissioning him to paint just two of the many historical and allegorical figures located therein.[37] With these fragments—a shaky foundation to begin with—Boskovits associated a number of other paintings in order to recreate an artist whose style, rather animated early on, he maintained, became progressively stiffer and more conservative, though ultimately his art recouped some of its original spatial amplitude. Right or wrong, the problematic aspects of Boskovits's argumentation only continue to mount. On what basis, for example, the art historian ascribed to Ambrogio a lively early manner going back to c. 1380 is never clear. Nevertheless, the remaining portion of *The Consignment*, executed in 1386, would seem to fit in well with the initial stage of the painter's career according to Boskovits's outline. Surprisingly, however, Boskovits pointedly denied authorship to Ambrogio, unjustly criticizing the fresco's vigorous figural movements and color scheme as monotonous and pallid. Boskovits then proceeded to contradict his assessment of Ambrogio's earliest tendencies by asserting that the artist began his career in a style reminiscent of the brothers Cioni, and soon thereafter came under the sway of their competent but unimaginative follower Niccolò di Pietro Gerini. Yet such an assumption would exclude a fresh and spirited initial phase for Ambrogio, since it was the Cioni who almost single-handedly defined the reductively severe idiom of Florentine painting in the mid-to-late trecento; their work is compelling, but never vivacious. Moreover, even if one were to ignore this inconsistency, there is something else that cannot be overlooked: the genuine lyricism and tenderness of the Misericordia fresco that is in fact apparent throughout the entire group of paintings that scholars have attached to Ambrogio's still poorly defined *oeuvre*, including those that some have placed under the rubric of the Pseudo-Ambrogio. This tends

further to belie Boskovits's estimate concerning his artistic training in the later-trecento ambience of the Cioni and the trajectory of much of his subsequent career under the impact of his sometime partner Niccolò Gerini. This "softer" appraisal of Ambrogio's works, accepted here, encompasses paintings in both the devotional and (of present concern) narrative modes.

Putting the hypothetical character of these divergent views aside, one must return nonetheless to this fact: because it is certain from later tax records that Ambrogio di Baldese was born about 1352, and since the Misericordia payment of 1386 is the first extant record associating him with any work of art, nothing is really known of his artistic activity during the first thirty-three years of his life.[38] But the assumption on purely stylistic grounds that he was the painter mainly responsible for what is left of the Misericordia fresco is the most logical one, given the verifiably static character of Gerini's paintings, both devotional and narrative, and admitting our inability to definitively assess Ambrogio's art at any stage in its development—especially the beginning—beyond noting in a general way this artist's softer, more fluid manner, to which the painting in question conforms. Archival documents, moreover, virtually confirm this notion, suggesting as well a concordance between Ambrogio's artistic temperament and his affective one.

Ambrogio di Baldese and the Misericordia

Whether Gerini ever again worked for the Florentine Misericordia is not known. On the contrary, certain company deliberations establishing Ambrogio di Baldese's continuing association with the confraternity have long been a matter of published record, and together they make the attribution to him of the residence fresco more compelling. On 16 April 1387 he was paid for painting a wooden tabernacle set above the small portal on the northern flank of the oratory to protect Alberto Arnoldi's 1361 relief of the Madonna and Child.[39] On 16 October 1392 Ambrogio was invited back to the Misericordia to restore a painting—unspecified, but more than likely the one he had executed six years earlier—for which he was paid the following 21 November.[40] And on 22 August 1407 the company reimbursed him for work on, or possibly restoration of, a wall and an old panel painting.[41]

One further deliberation linking Ambrogio to the Misericordia was published in part long ago, but has received virtually no attention since, and has been referred to correctly only by the most recent scholar to call passing attention to it.[42] On 17 December 1400 the company captains

> leased and gave up for rent to Giovanni di Jacopo, lasagna-maker (*sic*) of San Salvatore parish, the upper part of the house (i.e., residence) of the said society, which the painter Ambrogio di Baldese inhabited, for the coming five years, [this present lease] having begun the first day of the month of November just past, for payment of four gold florins for each year. With this agreement: that the aforementioned Giovanni be bound and that he should have to receive, maintain, and oversee all children who will be brought to the said house of the Misericordia, and to oversee them well and diligently as is the custom. And [that he be required] to pay the said rent of six years in [increments every (?)] six months.[43]

Despite the inconsistency in defining the term of the lease, two interesting facts emerge from the text of this document. First, it is clear that prior to 1400 Ambrogio di Baldese occupied—almost certainly rented—premises on the upper floor of the residence of the institution for which he had already worked professionally in 1386, 1387, and 1392, and for which he would again work as late as 1407. This is confirmed by a previously unpublished deliberation of the Misericordia captains, a mundane one at that, dated 21 January 1397 (Florentine style), recording how

> they assigned Ambrogio di Baldese for expenditures made by him in the house of the society which he inhabits, in a small vaulted room,for contracting services, lime, bricks, and stones,and for other things ordered by the captains, in all sixteen *lire*,ten *soldi*.[44]

Just where Ambrogio went to live when he gave up his quarters at the Misericordia is uncertain, though on 26 February 1405 (Florentine style) he was dwelling in the nearby parish of San Lorenzo, as recorded in a notarial memorandum dissolving his business partnership with the painter Smeraldo di Giovanni.[45] The second fact made evident by the deliberation of 1400 is that the man who replaced Ambrogio on the upper floor of the Misericordia residence, Giovanni di Jacopo, made a covenant with the confraternity over and above his contract to pay rent: he consented to administer an existing facility for children delivered to the company residence throughout the six-year course of his sojourn there. Moreover, the choice of the words "receive, maintain, and oversee" used to describe Giovanni's duties seems to confirm what was

proposed earlier: that this facility, simple though it may have been, was a true shelter, a home where such children might live for days, perhaps even weeks. The new tenant's agreement with the Misericordia was renewed on 5 August 1406, less than three months before it was due to expire. On that day, in two related deliberations, the company captains not only

> assigned Giovanni di Jacopo, gold-worker, for the rent of the house, on account of the burden and expenses that he bears for the care of children, one florin,

they also

> deliberated that the house of the society of the Misericordia thereafter be leased to Giovanni di Jacopo, tenant, for payment of three florins per year beginning on the first of next November of the current year, 1406, and they subtracted for the same (i.e., Giovanni) one florin of the rent. And this they did having considered the work and expenses for which he will labor by day and by night for keeping lost or wayward children in his house.[46]

Together, the three documents referring to Giovanni di Jacopo establish what the varied bits of mostly fourteenth-century testimony presented earlier in this essay could only suggest: that the Misericordia took an active role to ensure the welfare of children otherwise without responsible adult guardianship. They also verify the existence of a home for such children at the headquarters of the Misericordia itself, at least by the year 1400. They further reveal that this home, which necessarily must have been limited in size and scope, was supervised by a resident director and was located on the upper floor of the company residence, in the supervisor's apartment. What life must have been like for Giovanni di Jacopo is hard to imagine, but the twin explanations for the rent reduction offered to him by the Misericordia captains upon renewing his lease suggest that it was anything but tranquil![47]

It is certain that the Misericordia brethren continued to run a shelter for juveniles inside their premises on the Piazza del Duomo; other recent historians have located documents to this effect from the second quarter of the quattrocento, following the temporary merger in 1425 of the confraternity with another lay charitable association, the Compagnia Maggiore di Santa Maria del Bigallo.[48] But some doubt might remain

whether such was the case prior to 1400, despite the compounded pieces of evidence, scattered to be sure, pointing to this conclusion, including the *Consignment* fresco and its proposed original location, the payments to Stagio Barducci for baptismal candles, certain items contained in the inventory of 1368, and those brief notices from 1348 and 1386 quoted above mentioning the company's "hospital" and "hospice." Such doubt vanishes, however, with the publication here of another document linking the painter Ambrogio di Baldese to the Misericordia, one which answers a question posed in 1880 by Cesare Guasti, who first published the deliberation of 1400 naming Giovanni di Jacopo as tenant at the company headquarters and administrator of its children's shelter. Guasti wondered if Ambrogio, like Giovanni, had had charitable duties to perform while he resided there.[49] This new document is a contract specifying that

> Ambrogio di Baldese, the son of Mona Santina, who resides in the house (i.e., residence) of the company, must give for the lease of a loft that he rents from the company five gold florins a year, from which it is desired to knock off (*sic*) one gold florin, which he must have each year for his salary to keep the lost children, and for this reason he must give the remainder each year [of] four gold florins per year. I (i.e., Ambrogio) sign again the said lease the first of November 1390, and thus the year commences. We have abstracted from [the earlier agreement] where [it is written that] said Mona Santina must [pay] retroactively, at page 118.[50]

Notations recording a series of three cash payments fulfilling the terms stipulated are written below the contract, dated 28 November 1391 and the following 20 January and 30 March.

Although the Italian-language text of this document leaves out the personal pronouns, it seems, as indicated here and for reasons which will soon become apparent, that Ambrogio not only agreed to assume the lease from his mother, Mona Santina, but also the job of looking after the unfortunate children entrusted to the Misericordia. Generously, therefore, for the same difficult work that Giovanni di Jacopo would do a decade and more later—although eventually Giovanni received even more favorable financial terms—the Misericordia granted Ambrogio a reduction in his rent. Guasti's question appears thus to be

answered. Moreover, judging from the dated payments, the confraternity also allowed Ambrogio to pay the rent retroactively, for the year just past, as, according to the contract, his mother had before him.

Mona Santina di Baldese

If this interpretation is correct, this contract reveals another thing: that Ambrogio di Baldese lived at the Misericordia, where he directed its operations on behalf of children, as much as ten years earlier than what previously had been confirmed. Furthermore, while the record of payments ends in March of 1392, the text of the contract makes it clear that the agreement was for more than a single year. Presumably, this contract would have been replaced by a new accord that continued through at least 21 January 1397 (Florentine style), the date Ambrogio was reimbursed for his alterations to the company residence, and possibly through 1400, when Giovanni di Jacopo took his place. In 1390, Ambrogio was about thirty-eight years old.[51] While it remains unknown whether he resided at the Misericordia even earlier than that, the document does indicate that the artist's mother did. In fact, four additional documents, one of which is referred to at the end of this rental agreement with Ambrogio, provide a record of her continuous residence there dating back to 1368, revealing that she cared for parentless youngsters as well. The first of these is a contract that reads:

> Mona Santina di Baldese, who lives in the house (i.e., residence) of the company, must have each year, beginning on the 15th day of September 1368, one gold florin, which money she must have to keep the lost children for the said company.[52]

A regular record of annual salary payments follows, beginning in 1369—suggesting that she was paid for her services at the end of each contract year—and running to 1376, with the oddity that the payment for 1375 follows that for 1376; probably, Mona Santina's 1375 salary was not entered in timely fashion and was noticed as missing only when the entry for the following year was made. Then, a four-florin payment is recorded for 1380, specifying that it included reimbursement for all the years from 1377 through 1380. A quickly written notation of a three-florin stipend covering the years 1381-83 completes the entries. One might easily conclude that, toward the end of the contractual period, the Misericordia was either negligent in paying at least this employee on time, or that it was experiencing certain financial difficulties. Far

more likely, however, with such a minimal yearly wage involved, Mona Santina had simply agreed with the confraternity to forego annual payments of her salary, and instead had consented to let them add up over several years and receive them in lump sums. The specific purpose for doing so becomes clear from the second among this group of four documents.

Although Mona Santina di Baldese was living in the Misericordia residence by 1368, where she ran its facility for unattached children, the earliest rental agreement—this is the second document—to survive is from seven years later:

> Mona Santina di Baldese, who lives in the house (i.e., residence) of the company, rented the loft above the entrance of this house for the duration and term of five years, begun on the first of November of the year 1375, for a price of five florins per year.[53]

Surely, this "loft above the entrance" to the residence is the same loft referred to in Ambrogio's lease of 1390 and identical to "the upper part of the house" described in the original agreement with Giovanni di Jacopo ten years after that. There, too, it should be recalled, close by the upper-floor kitchen, were stored some of the covers used in burials, probably intended at least in part for the company's youthful dependants. This second document also lists Mona Santina's rent payments, running from 1376 to 1383, and thus beyond the five-year period of the contract. Surprisingly, however, given the terms of the accord, which set the annual rental fee at five florins, each entry records payment of only four florins, and the one dated 13 November 1380 is offset by a notice immediately after it of Mona Santina's four-year (1377-80) stipend totalling four florins cited above, awarded "to keep lost children." Apparently, the one-florin reduction in annual rent granted as a salary that both Ambrogio di Baldese and Giovanni di Jacopo later enjoyed had earlier precedent in the dealings between Mona Santina and the Misericordia. Evidently, too, as suggested, in 1377 the two parties reached an agreement whereby she gave up actual receipt of her one-florin yearly stipends, preferring to leave them on account with the company, letting them accumulate, and using them eventually to pay off a single year's rent. The final entry in this second document—for 1383—follows this pattern, referring to the three-year (1381-83), three-florin wage noted earlier that is augmented by an additional florin for the current year's salary, ordinarily payable twelve months hence but

here bestowed in advance, together exchanged for this year's rent of four florins. The entry concludes rather curtly, affirming that "for her [1384] salary she must have nothing."

The third of the four documents testifying to Mona Santina's long sojourn at the Misericordia mentions the document just described. Written in 1383, it is the rental agreement spanning the interim between her lease of 1375 and the contract of 1390 binding the company and her son Ambrogio. (It is this third document to which the pact of 1390 alludes.) Pointedly, this new agreement also makes note of the earlier accord committing Mona Santina to oversee the company's facility for children, although from now on her salary was to come from a source other than the Misericordia's general operating fund, as apparently had been the case previously.

> [M]ad[onna] Santina di Baldese, who lives in the house (i.e., residence) of the company, must give for the lease of a loft which she rents from the company five gold florins a year, as appears in this [volume] at page 103, of which one gold florin is willed [by a] testator that she must have each year for her salary to keep the lost children, as appears in this [volume] at page 316. And for this reason it remains [for Mona Santina] to give each year [in rent] four gold florins a year. He (?) has paid for [her] salary on the 13th day of November.[54]

A list of payments covering the annual rent of four florins begins in 1384. Lucky Mona Santina: the unnamed testator who henceforth endowed her position also provided her a salary for that year of one florin, equal to the stipend which she had drawn from the Misericordia in advance to pay her rent for 1383. In the end, she came out one florin ahead! Regular four-florin rent payments were made annually through 1388; in 1389 and 1390 they were made in full, albeit for unexplained reasons, incrementally. No further payment is recorded.

The final document in this series is a one-page inventory of goods and possessions of the Misericordia written in 1389. Among the items listed:

> The house (i.e., residence) of the Misericordia that Mona Santina inhabits produces in rent 4 florins a year, the remainder stays with her for the receiving of children. 4 florins.[55]

Unquestionably, this statement merely reflects the lease-and-salary agreement worked out in 1383: officially the rent must have remained

five florins annually, but Mona Santina's one-florin yearly stipend effectively reduced that figure to four florins. This is confirmed by the final two entries in the payment record following the 1383 agreement just cited, as well as by the continuation of this policy in the contract with Ambrogio di Baldese dated 1390.

Each of the five documents that mention Mona Santina di Baldese is found in one manuscript containing, among other things, the texts of wills naming the Misericordia as trustee and/or beneficiary, today located in the Archivio di Stato in Florence and catalogued as Bigallo, vol. 724. They furnish all that is positively known of her. She disappears entirely from the archival record after 1390, and indeed, given that her son apparently took over both her lodging and duties at the Misericordia in that year, it is likely that she died at that time. Her earlier history is more elusive. Included in two companion volumes to Bigallo 724 are three testaments of women named Mona Santa and Mona Santina, but these all refer to women who perished in the Black Death of 1348 or died shortly thereafter, and none of them was married to, nor as far as one can ascertain the descendant of, a man named Baldese.[56] Similarly, a single individual referred to as Sancta is listed among the records of both 1351 and 1354 made for the city-wide tax assessments known as the Estimo, but neither was her husband named Baldese nor is a family name given.[57] There is, however, a small, mid-fourteenth-century archival volume made for the Estimo authorities containing the names of all heads of families in the San Giovanni quarter of Florence, which includes the site of the Misericordia. That volume mentions several women named Mona Sancta and Mona Sanctina. Although none of these is specifically surnamed Baldese, one, "Mo[na] Sancta d[i]torino" of the *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion, listed as having one mouth (her own, or one besides her own?) to feed, may have been the sister of a certain Baldese Turini baldesis. This Baldese was an influential man then living in the adjacent White Lion neighborhood of the Santa Maria Novella quarter, who was assessed the very considerable sum of 563 *lire* in both the Estimo of 1351 and that of 1354.[58] This may be our sole clue to Mona Santina di Baldese's origins, and to those of her son Ambrogio as well. For it is clear from archival records, including those of the Estimo levies of 1351 and 1354, that the name Baldese was, if anything, more unusual than the name Santa/Santina. In any case, only the few men thus named and surnamed, Baldese Turini baldesis among them, are listed there with their assessments. Family members, unfortunately, are not mentioned.[59]

We know just one indisputable fact of Ambrogio di Baldese's early existence: the approximate date of his birth, calculated from his exhaustive declaration for the Florentine Catasto of 1427. His age is given as "almost seventy-five"; thus, he would have been born in either 1352 or 1353, depending on when in 1427 this statement of his possessions, credits, debits, and family situation, and in turn his tax assessment, was made.[60] The Catasto declaration also mentions Ambrogio as resident in the *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion within the San Giovanni quarter of the city, the same neighborhood where he had lived over two decades earlier when his partnership with the painter Smeraldo di Giovanni dissolved. It is perhaps more than coincidental that this is precisely the section of the city where Mo[na] Sancta d[i]torino had lived in the middle of the previous century, around the time when Ambrogio was born. Given the custom of that era—a custom which continues today—for a person's place of residence in Florence to remain fixed throughout a lifetime, it appears likely that this woman, listed by Estimo officials as a head-of-household, is to be identified as Mona Santina di Baldese, who later lived and worked at the nearby Misericordia, and that the lone mouth she had to feed, if not specifically her own, was that of her infant son Ambrogio.[61] Probably, she had been widowed recently, or her husband had abandoned her, leaving her either pregnant or with a small child, depending on how one interprets the indication that she had one mouth to feed. In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever as to who Mona Santina's spouse and Ambrogio's father was. If this was the case, her interest, and indeed her son's, in caring for defenseless children at the Misericordia, so close to where they resided, was surely more than perfunctory. Desperately poor, saddled with a fatherless child, and unaided by her well-to-do presumed brother, Mona Santina must have welcomed the company's offer of lodging, as well as the paltry sum she received for her efforts on behalf of its youthful wards.

Ambrogio di Baldese was between fourteen and sixteen years of age in September of 1368, when his mother is first documented as living in the Misericordia residence and tending parentless children there. Of course, Mona Santina may have been dwelling in those quarters and performing the same work earlier than that. Be that as it may, the record of her presence at and labor for the Misericordia is continuous for twenty-two years, through 1390, at which point her son, by then in his late thirties, seems to have taken over. Did Ambrogio live with his mother in the children's shelter prior to that, possibly from his earliest childhood? While there is nothing to indicate that he did, neither is there evidence to the contrary. Unfortunately, the extant fourteenth-

century documents are silent on this matter and everything else pertaining to the role of the painter and his mother as directors of the refuge. In particular, the archival record reveals nothing about what Mona Santina and Ambrogio actually did there on either an extended or daily basis: the company's expectations for them, their interactions with the company captains, the nature of their duties, what they required of the youths they supervised, etc. Further discussion, therefore, necessarily remains in the realm of speculation and can only hint in a general way at what their situation at the Misericordia was like.

Nevertheless, a plausible picture can be drawn. Given the longevity of the Baldese family's association with the shelter, for example, one may assume that the company was satisfied with their efforts on behalf of the children. If Mona Santina and Ambrogio went beyond the minimum required of them, one might even say that during their tenure they provided every child in the temporary custody of the Misericordia confraternity with at least the semblance of a family life, while the company brethren sought for each of their young charges some more permanent domestic accommodation. In such an imaginative paradigm, Mona Santina would have presided over that "family" as a sort of surrogate mother, carrying out the day-to-day "household" duties assigned to her. If in fact her son Ambrogio was present at the Misericordia on a daily basis prior to 1390, the unhappy children there may have looked to him as they would to an older brother. Whether he would have relished playing the male role model for them, or been able to play it attentively, is even more conjectural, for in those years Ambrogio was learning and then exercising his profession as an artist and surely had little time to engage in the immediate affairs of the facility and the daily business of looking after children. Completing this fanciful family portrait, the members of the company, led by their captains, collectively would have assumed the part of the father figure insofar as they held title to the premises where their ephemeral brood lived, and it was they who were ultimately responsible for overseeing and dispensing the funds earmarked for it. In time, as noted, Ambrogio replaced his mother as director of the children's home, continuing the family tradition for as much as another decade, although chances are that by then the demands of his profession rendered him even less able than before to really manage it. After 1390, therefore, one imagines that the artist's young wife, Mona Margherita—age fifty-five at the time of the 1427 Catasto, and thus born about 1372—did most of the work.

Results, Conclusions, and Further Proposals: Ambrogio's Catasto Declaration

Using various means, this essay constructs the argument that, as early as the second half of the fourteenth century, the Florentine company of the Misercordia maintained on a limited scale inside its headquarters a shelter where unwanted children might reside until better accommodations for them could be found elsewhere. Scattered bits of evidence from the early records of the confraternity, some referring to children outright, some only by inference, are pieced together and considered as fragments of a larger whole. They seem to indicate a genuine, multifaceted pattern of concern for, and action on behalf of, the least fortunate among the city's juveniles, including those without parents. Nevertheless, even such a cumulative interpretation is undeniably tentative, for the value of those traces of evidence in making the case comes from stacking them one atop another and extracting from the resulting structure what is but a silhouette. The fresco of 1386, painted, as nearly as one can tell, mainly by Ambrogio di Baldese, gives that structure a more solid foundation, for the surviving fragment clearly shows the Misericordia captains within the company loggia handing small children over to young women. Despite testimony from a later era, however, the exact meaning of this painting might remain elusive if not for the series of confraternity documents naming Ambrogio di Baldese, his mother, and a successor, all tenants in the company residence, as caretakers in their upper-floor living quarters of *fanciulli smarriti*—apparently the youngsters pictured in the fresco by the artist himself. The expression "lost children," appearing repeatedly in these documents, is one that defies unequivocal definition. But studies by other scholars concerning the widespread practice of abandonment support the interpretation that many, even most, of those lost children were unwanted at home and left at the Misericordia in the care of its appointed guardians on an interim basis. It is these company documents, therefore, that provide the structure of the argument with a sound framework.

The previous section of this study ends with hypotheses as to the personal history of Mona Santina di Baldese and how she came to accept her job as resident supervisor of the early Misericordia's small facility for parentless children, and about the role there of her son Ambrogio, which probably evolved over time. Certain conclusions and further proposals are possible as well. The documents concerning Mona Santina and Ambrogio that run from 1368 to nearly 1400, together

with other related pieces of archival evidence that extend that arc of time both backward and forward, shed new light on the public decorative program conceived and executed contemporaneously by the confraternity for its headquarters.[62] Employing an architectual form frequently attached to the facades of major hospitals and hospices in that era, especially in Central Italy, the Misericordia's oratory loggia, built during the 1350s, is now more understandable as a visual statement of organizational mission as well as a practical addendum to the building. And Alberto Arnoldi's two sculptures of the Madonna and Child—the half-figure relief of 1361 outside and above the small oratory portal opening onto the Piazza del Duomo, and the full-length statue of 1359-64 rising above the oratory altar as the centerpiece of an iconographical ensemble visible from outside as well as inside—now more clearly indicate that a particular charitable service lay at the core of the company's pious motivation and social conscience. Like the loggia, both sculptures embody the general principle of neighborly love, but more specifically they allude to the merciful task of providing care for needy children.

Furthermore, on a personal level, the important communal role of the Misericordia and its work with children was an enduring aspect of Ambrogio di Baldese's consciousness from at least 1368. Confraternities, one recalls, figure prominently among the corporate institutions for which, according to the archival record, Ambrogio as an artist worked.[63] The existing evidence testifies that this life-long pattern of employment was initiated early in his career at the Misericordia, and from the beginning that pattern may have been encouraged by word of mouth, with the brethren of one institution passing on to those of another their satisfaction with his efforts. Conversely, it may have been the artist himself who preferred and chose to direct his career in this way. Most likely, there is some truth in both proposals.

Moreover, the artist's long-standing association with the Misericordia may have had other, perhaps unintended, yet deeply affecting results. In the first place, this relationship adds poignancy to the fact that in all likelihood his frescoed *Consignment of Abandoned Children and Orphans to Natural and Adoptive Mothers* originally decorated the exterior wall above the doorway into the Misericordia residence, where children entered into the custody of the confraternity. For this surface is probably identical to the front wall of "the loft above the entrance of this house," the cramped quarters mentioned in Mona Santina's rental agreement of 1375 where she and Ambrogio lived with their youthful charges. In addition, this fresco and other paintings that

scholars have associated with his name possess that delicate softness and warmth that separate them from the vestiges of the severe, later-trecento Florentine style apparent in the work of his contemporaries. If one accepts the idea that artists' personal experiences may at times find reflection, consciously or not, in the formal qualities of their work, it is tempting—however hypothetical—to link such artistic expression in Ambrogio to the solicitude that his experience with the Misericordia must have engendered.

Finally, and more verifiably, archival testimony from late in his life suggests that Ambrogio di Baldese's early years spent in close proximity to the lost children of the company continued to play a pivotal role in his life. The painter's 1427 Catasto return, filed together with that of his son Baldese, a notary, portrays him as an aged *paterfamilias*, benevolently albeit with difficulty helping to support the debt-ridden ser Baldese and numerous small grandchildren. Ambrogio's various landed holdings were significant, including a farm worked by two hired hands purchased thirty-six years earlier and paid for with loans taken out against the collateral of his net worth at that time. Some of Ambrogio's lands were productive, according to the Catasto declaration, yielding for sale several varieties of grain, wine, olives, pears, chestnuts, and lumber, and supporting a number of pigs and two bulls. He and his son, moreover, each named three parties owing them money.[64]

But thereafter, the picture turns gloomy. Besides Ambrogio and his wife Mona Margherita, the same declaration reports that the household included ser Baldese and his wife Mona Maria, ages thirty-four and twenty-six; their children Maria, Smeralda, Francesco, and Bartolomeo, ages seven, four, three, and two; as well as nine-year-old Buoso, a child of ser Baldese, who "had him before he took a wife." Yet another child was expected in three months, and two more, Giovanni and Michele, ages six and three, children of Ambrogio's son Michele who had died in Lucca "already three years ago or more," further enlarged the household of the aged artist. It is clear from what follows in the Catasto return that all these very young grandchildren were not easily sustained. Little Michele "was born after his father's death. His mother gave him to [a] wetnurse at Capannoli at the time of birth for six *lire* a month and for lack of means never took him back; twenty-five whole florins remain [for her] to have." To a servant girl named Mechera, seventeen years old and about to marry, Ambrogio had promised a dowry of at least one hundred *lire*. He declared his inability to pay in timely fashion his assessed *prestanzoni*, or forced loans, to the commune of Florence, and mentioned having pawned two articles of

outer clothing ten or eleven months earlier. Ambrogio also named two individuals to whom he owed money.[65]

But what placed the artist and his household most deeply in a financial bind were the thirty-one individuals listed in the affidavit to whom ser Baldese was indebted. Included among them were several persons to be reimbursed for their child-rearing services: "the husband of the wetnurse of the aforementioned Michele, thirty florins or thereabouts" (note the higher figure here than the one previously stated); "Pratese da Figline, he of the Prato district, for [the] remainder of [the] wetnursing of the aforementioned Francesco, ten *lire*;" "the widow Mona Caterina [who] lives in [via] Palazzuolo in the Prato district for [the] wetnursing of the aforementioned boy [Francesco], twenty-one *lire*, eleven *soldi*;" and "Dino the shoemaker in the Or San Michele district for the remainder of [the] wetnursing of the aforementioned Bartolomeo, one florin." Attempting to make ends meet, ser Baldese, like his father, pawned an assortment of his possessions, mostly clothing, to raise the necessary cash.[66]

There can be no question that Ambrogio di Baldese's last years—he died in 1429—were difficult ones. Although the Florentine Catasto officials granted each of the eleven persons in his household a two-hundred-*lire* exemption on the total tax due, the net worth of the artist and his son together was calculated to be only two hundred fifty-nine florins, twelve *soldi*. This is but marginally more than the sum Ambrogio alone had borrowed in 1391 to pay Messer Tomaso Sachetti for the farm listed among his real estate possessions, using his net worth at that time as surety. Clearly, the painter's own financial position had deteriorated over the last half of his lifetime, in no small part due to the swollen size of his household and his son Baldese's precarious situation. One imagines, however, that Ambrogio soldiered on in the face of this challenge, but for reasons that went beyond common decency and parental dutifulness. If nothing else, one might conjecture that the enduring memory of his mother's and his own long involvement in the Misericordia's program of child welfare had left him profoundly impressed with the meaning of family love and loyalty. For Ambrogio—fatherless, for whatever reason, as far as the records reveal—may himself have come of age at the Misericordia and helped his mother to care for the small and constantly changing community of parentless youngsters temporarily housed there. And it is certain that eventually he took over the difficult task of directing this makeshift household, most likely with the aid of his young wife. Ambrogio's long association with children who had been denied the benefits of home and blood

relationships probably instilled in him a sympathy for their plight, and possibly encouraged him to labor conscientiously on their behalf. How lucky he must have felt later on in life when his own numerous grandchildren did not have to endure a similar fate, and therefore how much more willingly, one supposes, he carried the financial burden they imposed upon him. Furthermore, perhaps replicating Ambrogio's own earliest childhood, his son Baldese, born around 1393, must have resided at the Misericordia with his parents until their move in 1400 or slightly earlier. There the painter would have seen his boy eating, playing, doing little chores, and learning discipline alongside his youthful companions at the shelter, yet unlike them always knowing and basking in the security of his parents' presence. Surely, the memory of this lesson, too, in the value of unbroken kinship remained with Ambrogio to the end of his life, making the economic hardship of his final decade a small price to pay for the company and affections of a closely knit family.

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Notes

[1] Among the specialized studies, see especially my article "Advertising Charity in the Trecento: The Public Decorations of the Misericordia in Florence," *Studies in Iconography* 17 (1996): 215-309, with the principal earlier sources listed in 277-78 n. 1. See also Howard Saalman's important architectural study of the company's headquarters: *The Bigallo: The Oratory and Residence of the Compagnia del Bigallo e della Misericordia in Florence* (New York: New York UP for the College Art Association of America, 1969); the catalogue by Hanna Kiel of works of art formerly in the possession of the Misericordia and its affiliate, the Compagnia Maggiore di Santa Maria del Bigallo: *Il Museo del Bigallo a Firenze*, Gallerie e musei di Firenze, directed by Ugo Procacci (Milan: Electa Editrice, 1977); my article furnishing an important addendum to Kiel's volume: "A Lost Fresco Cycle by Nardo and Jacopo di Cione at the Misericordia in Florence," *The Burlington Magazine* 141 no. 1151 (February 1999): 75-80; and most recently Phillip J. Earenfight's "The Residence and Loggia della Misericordia ("Il Bigallo"): Art and Architecture of Confraternal Piety, Charity, and Virtue in Late Medieval Florence" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1999).

[2] See the brief comments on this issue in Levin, "Advertising Charity" 277-78 n. 1. The scholar cited therein who lately has cast doubt on the extent of the early Misericordia's charitable operations is John Henderson; this view is reiterated in his excellent, wide-ranging, more recent volume *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 12, 299, 345-46, 367, 370, 412. The original text of the 1489 statues of the confraternity appears in Ugo Morini, *Documenti inediti o poco noti per la storia della Misericordia di Firenze (1240-1525)* (Florence: Venerabile Arciconfraternita [della Misericordia], 1940) 59-72 (doc. 23, where the date is given as 1490), esp. 60, 64-65 concerning burial of the dead.

[3] Levin, "Advertising Charity." The present study attempts to define more precisely the nature of this facility.

[4] Luigi Passerini, *Storia degli stabilimenti di beneficenza e d'istruzione elementare gratuita della città di Firenze* (Florence: Tipografia Le Monnier, 1853) 456-62.

[5] Lucia Sandri, *L'Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala di S. Gimignano nel quattrocento: Contributo alla storia dell'infanzia abbandonata*, Biblioteca della "Miscellanea Storica della Valdelsa," directed by Sergio Gensini, no. 4 (Florence: Società Storica della Valdelsa, 1982) 74-98, 170-75; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985) 104; Philip Gavitt, *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence: The Ospedale degli Innocenti, 1410-1536*, Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization, ed. Marvin B. Becker (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990) 190-95, 198-99, 203-04, 207-12; Lucia Sandri, "Modalità dell'abbandono dei fanciulli in area urbana: Gli esposti dell'Ospedale di San Gallo a Firenze nella prima metà del XV secolo," in *Enfance abandonnée et société en Europe, XIVe-XXe siècle: Actes du colloque international de Rome, janvier 1987* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1991) 999-1006; and Levin, "Advertising Charity" 230-31, 286-87 nn. 42-45.

[6] These deliberations and other early records of the Misericordia, including those discussed below, are catalogued among the volumes containing records of the Compagnia Maggiore di Santa Maria del Bigallo, reflecting that from 1425 to 1489 the two confraternities were formally joined as one. They were not again entirely separate, physically as well as legally, until the third decade of the next century. See Levin, "Advertising Charity" 279-80 nn. 13-14 (with earlier references); nn. 1-2 above; and n. 9 below.

[7] On both points see Passerini, *Storia* 458-59.

[8] The records include many references to identifiable testators leaving money and property for distribution by the Misericordia to named recipients. For example, Jachopo di Tano Linaiuolo left as his heir his son Tomaso, described as a *pupillo* and thus surely a child whose affairs would have to be managed by the Misericordia, which was named as a secondary beneficiary were he to die without issue (Archivio di Stato, Florence [hereafter cited as A. S. F.], Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 56r, not specifically dated but certainly from the mid 1360s). On another occasion, Monna Francescha, widow of Schelaio Franchi righetiere (*sic*), named the Misericordia her heir, leaving money and property to various specified relatives, servants, and other persons (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fols. 56v-57v, 20 December 1367). Two typical instances of the company captains dispensing alms are recorded on 16 October 1392 and 30 April 1393, totalling twenty-eight and forty *lire*, respectively

(A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fols. 90r, 92r). The sources of these sums included outright gifts of money left to the confraternity by testators, rents paid for the use of properties bequeathed to the company, and the sale of marketable items willed to the Misericordia or consigned as rental fees in lieu of cash; testamentary arrangements regarding these matters are abundantly documented, especially in A. S. F., Bigallo, vols. 723 and 724.

[9] The ordinance of 1557 reads in part: "Quicumque invenerit aliquos Pueros, vel puellas vagantes sine custodia, teneatur representare, et assignare in Platea Orti S. Michaelis, vel apud Domum Misericordiae Ufficiali Deputato per dictum commune." See the discussion, with reference to earlier transcriptions and citations of this law, in Levin, "Advertising Charity" 283-84 n. 28. The Misericordia had abandoned its headquarters to the Bigallo in the 1520s, eventually settling in its present location elsewhere on the Piazza del Duomo in 1576. See n. 6 above. But see also the comments below about the role of the Misericordia as caretaker of parentless children during the quattrocento, verified by recent historians.

[10] The text of the petition, written in Italian, is found on a small insert at fol. 83 of A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 2; the company's response is on fol. 84r. They are referred to and transcribed in Passerini, *Storia* 458, 902-03 (doc. Q), as well as in Cesare Torricelli, *La Misericordia di Firenze: Note storiche* (Florence: Arciconfraternita della Misericordia, 1940) 11-12.

[11] For example, A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fols. 84v (3 November 1390), 94v (4 December 1393), 108r (21 January 1397 [Florentine style]).

[12] The deliberation is written in Latin in A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 149r-v. It is cited in Passerini, *Storia* 461; in Morini, *Documenti* xvi, 45-46 (doc. 18); and in Torricelli, *La Misericordia* 16-17. Previously unnoticed is the deliberation of the same date, also on fol. 149v, recording payment of eight *lire* to the stationer Bartolo Tucci for this register and another book. On the term "quartieri," see n. 58 below. The reference to Villani is for the year 1337, recorded in his *Chronicle* (2.94) and referred to in Passerini, *Storia* 461-62 n. 1.

[13] Maintaining the former position, Passerini (*Storia* 462) referred to subsequent communal laws that seem to have taken the Misericordia

deliberation as a model to support his conviction about the deep, longstanding commitment of the Misericordia toward children.

[14] For example, A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 2, fols. 78r, 78v; A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fols. 18v, 22r, 24v, 55r, 140v, 159r, 162v; A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fols. 104v, 105r, 127r, 130v, 134v, 139r. These instances span the years from 1365 to 1410.

[15] On the various waves of disease and the ensuing mortality, see, Ann G. Carmichael, *Plague and Poor in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986). The coincidence of four events—the first great outbreak of the bubonic plague in 1348, the rapid enrichment of the Misericordia through testamentary bequests, the expansion and embellishment of its headquarters, and the sudden interest in maintaining records of the company's increasingly complex affairs, including detailed notices of its charitable activities—is surely not fortuitous. On the relationship between the first two points, see the comment, validated through the archival record, of the contemporary observer Matteo Villani in his *Chronicle* (1.7), cited in Passerini, *Storia* 448-49; and quoted in Torricelli, *La Misericordia* 5 (their reading of Villani's figure for the Misericordia's gain in net worth differs). For the impact of those two events on the physical structure and decoration of the Misericordia, see Levin, "Advertising Charity" 239-40, 293 n. 71.

[16] For example, on 28 May 1348 Jachopo di Lapo named various institutions, including the Misericordia, as heirs should his daughter—presumably young and without children—die or should she not enter a convent (in which case it was understood the convent would receive the estate) (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 12v); on 15 June 1363 Gianozzi Gieri Gualterotti named his son, who again was probably young, as heir, but stipulated further that if the latter died childless the estate was to be divided equally among the Misericordia, the Bigallo, the Company of Or San Michele, and Gianozzi's daughter (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 55r; see also A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 723, fol. 181v); and on 12 January 1406 (Florentine style) Mona Moraccia, described as a "povera p[er]sona" living with her "nipotj poveri," was allowed to retain possession for her lifetime of the half-share of the domestic property willed to the Misericordia by her father Gentile Daddo, after which it would pass to the Misericordia (the remainder was left to Or San Michele, surely with the same provision) (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc.

3, fols. 143v-144r). See also the first example in n. 8 above. In addition, some testators stipulated that dowry money entrusted to the Misericordia (see n. 14 above) that remained unused was to pass to the confraternity.

[17] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 324v. The translated passages read in the original: "p[er] tenere albattesimo p[er] fanciulli poveri e p[er] [il] mortorio dalchuno soldato," "p[er]lasop[r]ad[e]tta chagione," and "p[er] tenere albattesimo p[er] fanciul[l]i poveri e p[er] [i] mo[r]ti poveri."

[18] Richard C. Trexler, "The Foundlings of Florence, 1395-1455," *The History of Childhood Quarterly* 1 (1973): 269; Sandri, *Scala di S. Gimignano* 120-27 (see also Sandri, "Modalità dell'abbandono" 1008-09, 1012-13, 1013 n. 2); John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) 322-25, 374-75, 400, 400 n. 7, 420, 420 n. 75 (Boswell expands on the significance of baptism in this regard elsewhere in this volume); and Gavitt, *Charity and Children* 79, 187-88, 191, 193, 195-97, 202, 220.

[19] Levin, "Advertising Charity" 245-46, 297-98 nn. 90-97, esp. nn. 94, 96-97 (with additional references).

[20] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fols. 85v-86v. The passages referred to read in the original: "Nel fondachetto dove siraghunano i chapitani . . . Cinque sacchi co[n] choltre per sopellire e morti poveri ab[b]andonati" and "Insu palcho sopra a lentrare della chompangnia . . . Tre choltre per portare amorti a sopellire." The cooking utensils were kept in the "chucina" and in the "palcho di sopra al[l]a sala." In all, five rooms were inventoried in the following order: the "bottegha dentrare giu di sotto della chompangnia" and the "fondachetto" where the captains met (both clearly on the ground floor), then the "palcho" above the entrance, the "chucina," and finally the second "palcho" (these three on the upper level of the company headquarters). Almost surely these five rooms were in the residence (i.e., not the oratory and loggia) of the Misericordia, although excepting the "bottegha dentrare" exactly which spaces in the headquarters the other named rooms refer to is impossible to say; on the difficulty of interpreting such terms, see Saalman, *The Bigallo* 14-16, 15 n. 36, 16 n. 40, 47 n. 75. Saalman noted that the documentary sources reveal absolutely nothing about the original up-

per floor of the residence, although inventories of 1436 and 1576 contain references in each case to a "cucina" and a "palco" or "Camera" above it that, judging by where they appear in those inventories, again point to their having been on the upper-floor level (*The Bigallo* 27 n. 58, 29).

[21] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 32r. The translated passage reads in the original: "lascio al[l]a chompangnia del[l]a misericordia ov[v]ero a[llo] spedale e [ai] poveri di quella [la mia] reda."

[22] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 17v. The full text of this unpublished deliberation reads: "Ite[m] capitan[e]i p[rae]fa[c]tj abs[que] d[i]c[t]o Nuto [di Francesco Barberino] stantiaver[un]t et p[ro]vider[un]t q[uod] clarus girolamj cam[erlingus] / d[i]c[ta]e sotiet[atis] solv[e]rit [et] solve[re] teneat[ur] [et] debeat p[ro] pictorib[us] / {et] imagi[n]i[bu]s et plurib[us] al[iis] reb[us] fact[is] i[n] hospitio [et] domo mis[er]ico[r]d[ia]e / ut constat i[n] libro capse di[cti] chang (i.e., camerlingi) [acar[ta]] i[n] totu[m] flor[eni] dece[m] librj dece[m] / septe[m] (*sic*) sol[di] duo den[arii] sex p[ro]ut paret i[n] d[i]c[t]o libro a car[ta] / man[u] not[arii] nastasij."

[23] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 27v. The translated passage reads in the original: "A Nicholo di Piero e Ambruogio di Baldese dipintori a di 22 di giugno per [il] resto del lavorio della dipintura della faccia dinanzi della casa della Misericordia fior[ini] 17 doro." Passerini, *Storia* 457; Giovanni Poggi (with I[gino] B[envenuto] Supino and Corrado Ricci), "La Compagnia del Bigallo," *Rivista d'arte* 2 (1904): 229 (doc. 4); Saalman, *The Bigallo* 46 (doc. 7a); and Kiel, *Bigallo* 120-21 (cat. no. 8).

[24] See the discussions on the original location, transfer, present condition, and further ramifications of this fresco, including its title, in Passerini, *Storia* 456-58; Poggi, "Bigallo" 195, 208-09; Saalman, *The Bigallo* 10-14, 20, 28-29, 61-62 (doc. 22); Kiel, *Bigallo* 5-6, 120-21 (cat. no. 8, with additional bibliography); Levin, "Advertising Charity" 221-33, 275; and Earenfight, "The Residence and Loggia della Misericordia." All but the first-named author illustrate the fresco.

[25] See the interpretation in Levin, "Advertising Charity" 230-32, based on several recent studies cited in n. 5 above; and for precise

references to the early Florentine guidebooks, see "Advertising Charity" 286 n. 40. It has been suggested to the author that the *fanciulli smarriti* of the documents discussed later in this article may have been the "*giovani* who roamed the city's streets, often causing trouble . . . street gangs of young 'toughs' . . . who would need some guidance and assistance," as mentioned by certain late-trecento Florentine chroniclers including Marchionne di Coppo Stefani and the anonymous author of the text published with the title *Alle bocche della piazza*. This is an attractive suggestion, and indeed, some youthful wards of the Misericordia may have fit this description: the chances are good that many such *giovani* were in fact teenagers who were newly orphaned and others who had run away or been chased from home and set adrift by their families for whatever reason. There are several problems with accepting this interpretation too readily, however. First, the children mentioned by the chroniclers are referred to only generically, as "fanciulli," never with the adjective "smarriti" attached as it is repeatedly in the Misericordia documents. Second, the number of instances when the chroniclers mentioned *fanciulli* at all is in fact extremely small, and even then the word is used only to describe a mob participating in the political convulsions that repeatedly swept over the city of Florence toward the end of the trecento. Never is this association made in the pertinent Misericordia documents. Third, although in many additional passages the chroniclers further alluded to the enraged and riotous crowd, they were surprisingly reticent about its exact composition. Yet, surely, it comprised adults, too, especially those belonging to the large class of low-income wage-earners in Florence that included the unruly and politicized *ciompi*. Therefore, it is difficult to say how prevalent and worrisome was juvenile delinquency, politically motivated or otherwise, late in the trecento. Perhaps it was not a serious problem at all, and thus of little concern to the Misericordia. Last—and most telling—the Gerini-Baldese fresco under investigation portrays only very small, innocent children, far more likely to be abandoned into the hands of a philanthropic organization in times of adversity than were their surely older, potentially destructive siblings, the *fanciulli* mentioned by the chroniclers, who are not represented in the painting. For the specific references to this latter group, see Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, *Cronaca fiorentina*, ed. Niccolò Rodolico, Rerum italicarum scriptores: Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento, ed. L. A. Muratori, rev. ed., ed. Giosuè Carducci and Vittorio Fiorini, vol. 30, pt. 1 (Città di Castello: Editore S. Lapi, 1903) 272-73 (rub. 717), 393 (rub. 902); and *Alle bocche della piazza: Diario di anonimo*

fiorentino (1382-1401) (B. N. F., Panciatichiano 158), ed. Anthony Molho and Franek Sznura, Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento: Studi e testi, vol. 14 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1986) xliv, 18 (rub. 2), 116 (rub. 50).

[26] See n. 24 above, esp. Levin, "Advertising Charity" 221-28, 281-84 nn. 21-29 (with exact references to earlier literature on the subject). A further piece of evidence confirming the north facade as the original site of the fresco is provided by the fact that the words "faccia dinanzi" used in the 1386 notice of payment to describe its location (see n. 23 above) also appear twice, for the same reason, in the document of 23 August 1446 recording twin payments to Rossello and Giunta di Jacopo Franchi and Ventura di Moro for having painted scenes in the life of St. Peter Martyr on the exterior of the Misericordia headquarters, frescoes which are still in place on the north facade in ruinous condition. See Poggi, "Bigallo" 241-42 (doc. 3).

[27] As in n. 25 above.

[28] Levin, "Advertising Charity" 228, 242, 246-47, 275, 284-85 n. 31 (with earlier references), 294 n. 73. On the increased role of the commune under the aegis of the Ufficio dei Pupilli et Adulti, see Francesca Morandini, "Statuti e Ordinamenti dell'Ufficio dei pupilli et adulti nel periodo della Repubblica Fiorentina (1388-1534)," *Archivio storico italiano* 113 (1955): 522-51; 114 (1956): 92-117; 115 (1957): 87-104.

[29] Levin, "Advertising Charity" 242, 275, 295 n. 80. Written reports of this practice date only to the late eighteenth century. Admittedly, other than the Gerini-Baldese fresco there is no proof that it occurred during the fourteenth century.

[30] For Gerini's participation with other artists—including Ambrogio di Baldese—on the project to decorate the Palazzo Datini (the Ceppo) in Prato, see Renato Piattoli, "Un mercante del Trecento e gli artisti del tempo suo," *Rivista d'arte* 12 (1930): 97-150. For Gerini's several collaborations with Jacopo di Cione, see David Bomford, Jill Dunkerton, Dillian Gordon, Ashok Roy, with contributions from Jo Kirby, *Art in the Making: Italian Painting before 1400*, exh. cat. (London: National Gallery Publications, 1989) 11, 124, 185-89. He also worked alongside Spinello Aretino, his own son Lorenzo, and seems to have worked closely with an indeterminate number of followers as well; see Raimond

van Marle, *The Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924) 611-46.

[31] Levin, "Advertising Charity" 232, 287-88 nn. 47-48 (with references to earlier scholarly analyses of Gerini's work).

[32] Levin, "Advertising Charity" 232, 287-88 n. 47. Summaries to date of previous art-historical opinion on this matter may be found in Walter and Elisabeth Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz: Ein kunstgeschichtliches Handbuch*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: V. H. Klostermann, 1940) 389 n. 32 (though Poggi ["Bigallo" 208-09] did not favor Ambrogio; rather, he, like most earlier critics, indiscriminately gave the fresco to both artists); and Kiel, *Bigallo* 120-21 (cat. no. 8).

[33] A[lessandro] Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese," in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, vol. 3 (Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1992) 134-35; one must ignore his reference at one point to the fresco as a painting in tempera on wood.

[34] See Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 133-34, for a convenient summary of Ambrogio's career.

[35] See Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 133-34, for many, though not all, of his collaborative episodes; for example, Guidotti does not specify that Ambrogio's outdoor fresco of 1397 in the Piazza della Signoria was executed together with Gerini, or that his frescoes of the following year on the inner facade wall of the Cathedral of Florence were carried out in conjunction with Mariotto di Nardo, Lorenzo di Bicci, and others. See Miklòs Boskovits, *Pittura fiorentina alla vigilia del Rinascimento* (Florence: Edam, 1975) 99 and Giovanni Poggi, *Il Duomo di Firenze: Documenti sulla decorazione della chiesa e del campanile tratti dall'archivio dell'Opera*, Italienische Forschungen herausgegeben vom Kunsthistorischen Institut in Florenz, no. 2 (Berlin: Cassirer, 1909) cvii, 204-05 (docs. 1012, 1014).

[36] See Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 134-35, for references and a summary of the opinions voiced in this regard. Even more recently see Laurence B. Kanter, "Lippo d'Andrea di Lippo," in Laurence B. Kanter, Barbara Drake Boehm, Carl Brandon Strehlke, Gaudenz Freuler, Christa

C. Mayer Thurman, and Pia Palladino, *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994) 318.

[37] Boskovits, *Pittura fiorentina*, esp. 109-11, 273-76; summarized in Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 134-35.

[38] See the discussion of Ambrogio's tax records below, esp. n. 60 for his age.

[39] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 54v. Poggi, "Bigallo" 229 (doc. 4).

[40] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 90r. Poggi, "Bigallo" 229 (doc 4); and Saalman, *The Bigallo* 46-47 (doc. 7b). Both of these authors recorded only the date of payment.

[41] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 147r. Poggi, "Bigallo" 229 (doc. 4); the date he gives for this notice, 28 September 1407, is crossed out in the manuscript, probably reflecting a secretarial error.

[42] A portion of this document (see the following note) was first published in Cesare Guasti, *Ser Lapo Mazzei: Lettere di un notaro a un mercante del secolo XIV, con altre lettere e documenti*, vol. 1 (Florence: Successori Le Monnier, 1880) 15-16 n. 3. Guasti speculated—correctly, as shown below—that Ambrogio di Baldese, like Giovanni di Jacopo, may have had charitable duties to carry out. Boskovits (*Pittura fiorentina* 260 n. 57) seems to have known of the document through Guasti's work, repeating the latter's error that Ambrogio resided at the house of the Bigallo (recall that the Misericordia and Bigallo were not joined until 1425). The brief mention of Ambrogio di Baldese in the document has been accurately summarized in Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 134.

[43] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 114r. The full text of the deliberation reads: "Ite[m] modo [et] forma p[rae]d[i]c[t]is locaver[un]t et c[on]cess[er]u[n]t adpension[em] / Joh[ann]i Jacobi lasagnar[e] p[o]p[uli] s[ancti] salvato[r]is domu[m] / d[i]c[ta]e sotietatis exp[ar]te sup[er]iorj qua[m] habitabat ambroxius / baldesis pictor p[ro] q[ui]nque an[n]is p[ro]x[imis] fut[uris] Jnytiatis / die p[ri]mo me[n]sis nove[m]br[is] p[ro]x[imi] p[raeteriti] p[ro] pensio[n]e floren[orum] / quartuor aur[i]

*Levin*p[ro] quolibj[t] an[n]o Cu[m] hijs pactis qu[od] d[i]c[tu]s / ant[e] Joh[ann]es teneat[ur] et debeat receptare tene[re] et ghu / B[er]nare o[mn]es pueros q[ui] ducent[ur] ad d[i]c[t]am domu[m] mis[er]icordi[a]e / et eos bene et diligent[er] ghub[er]nare ut mor[is] est Et / solve[re] d[i]c[t]am pens[ionem] de sex an[ni]s i[n] sex me[n]s[i]b[us]." I wish to acknowledge the help provided by Professors George Dameron and Gino Corti in transcribing this difficult archival notice. The trade of pasta-maker (*lasagnarius, lasagnaria*) appears as early as in the Florentine tax records of 1354; see A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega, vol. 307, fol. 103r. The parish to which Giovanni di Jacopo belonged is certainly San Salvatore al Vescovo (see n. 47 below; see also n. 58 below on the term "parish"). Whether the lease was to run for five or six years is impossible to say, given the ambiguity in the wording of this deliberation. The latter possibility seems likely insofar as another deliberation survives recording the renewal of the lease to Giovanni di Jacopo as of 1 November 1406, discussed below (see n. 46 for the text). But it must be remembered that the present document is merely a notarial record of a rental agreement, the official contract of which has not been located. In haste, therefore, the scribe attending the meeting of the Misericordia captains may erroneously have written "p[ro] q[ui]nque an[n]is" in the first sentence when he should have written "p[ro] sex an[n]is." On the other hand, struggling to keep pace with the company officers discussing the matter, his mind outrunning his hand, the notary may have erred in the final sentence, recording that Giovanni was to pay in six-month increments his rent "de sex an[ni]s" when he really meant to write "de quinque an[ni]s." In either case, it is clear from the several other lease and employment agreements discussed subsequently in this article that the duration of such accords was a very fluid matter, either not specified to begin with or extended year by year in *ad hoc* fashion. Again, I wish to thank Professor Dameron and also Professor James Morrison for discussing this matter with me at length.

[44] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fol. 108r. The full text reads: "Ite[m] stantiaver[un]t ambroxio baldesis p[ro] exp[e]n[s]is p[er] eu[m] factis i[n] do / mo sotiet[atis] qua[m] ha[bi]tat i[n] uno cam[er]ino p[ro] magist[erio] calce matto[ni]b[us] / et lapidib[us] [et] al[iis] reb[u]s ma[n]dat[is] [a] capitan[eis] i[n] totu[m] librj sedeci[m] s[oldi] x." Unfortunately the archival documents do not reveal exactly when Ambrogio terminated his residency at the Misericordia.

[45] A. S. F., Notarile Antecosiminiano, vol. 13277 (formerly M265), fasc. 1, insert 2, fol. 140r. Referred to in Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 134-35, though incorrectly as on fol. 120r. The memorandum commences: "Ambroxius olim baldesis pictor p[o]p[u]li sa[ncti] Laure[n]tii . . . ." I wish to acknowledge the aid of Dottoressa Rita Maria Comanducci in deciphering this document, written largely in abbreviated, formulaic jargon. Other documents (though not this one) pertaining to the partnership of Ambrogio di Baldese and Smeraldo di Giovanni are found in Carlo Gamba, "Giovanni dal Ponte," *Rassegna d'arte* 4 (1904): 177-86. The parish of San Lorenzo, in the *quartiere* of San Giovanni, *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion, did not include the property occupied by the Misericordia headquarters. On Florentine neighborhoods in general, see Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1982) 6-22, 205-19; and n. 58 below for this terminology. On the *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion and its principal parish and church of San Lorenzo in particular, see Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori, and Rucellai* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1977) 16, 100-04, 176-79, 231-32, 247 n. 65, 248, 261, 280, 283.

[46] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 2, fasc. 3, fols. 142r, 142v, respectively. The two deliberations read: "Ite[m] stantiaver[un]t Joh[ann]i Jacobi Battiloro pens[ionem] dom[us] / p[ro] oneri et exp[e]n[s]is qua[s] i[m]portat p[ro]rimedio pueris flor[enus] unu[s]" and "Ite[m] deliberaver[un]t qu[od] dom[us] sotiet[atis] mis[er]icordi[a]e de / inceps locet[ur] Joh[ann]i Jacobi pensionar[io] p[ro] pens[ione] / flor[enorum] triu[m] p[ro] an[n]o i[n] cip[ie]nd[o] i[n] cale[n]di[s] nove[m]br[is] p[ro]x[imi] fut[uri] / p[raese]ntis an[n]i miiij^{c}vi et min[u]er[un]t eide[m] / flo[renum] unu[m] de pensione Et h[a]ec fecer[un]t considerato labore et / exp[e]n[s]is p[er] quas fac[i]e[t] de die et denoct[e] p[ro] ritine[n]do / pueros smarritos seu deviatos i[n] domo sua." In the first deliberation "Battiloro" is actually raised above the word "lasagnare," which has been crossed out. Apparently by this time—1406—Giovanni di Jacopo's occupation had shifted from making pasta (see n. 43 above) to preparing gold for skilled workmen.

[47] The Bigallo archives yield no further information on Giovanni di Jacopo. But among the Catasto records of 1427 are listed thirty persons of that name, fourteen of whom had family surnames and thus

came from established lineages (all but two of these had substantial taxable possessions), and of the remaining sixteen—the group to which the Giovanni di Jacopo of interest here surely belonged—seven were declared "miserabile" and taxed nothing while the other nine had possessions valued at between 111 and 4447 florins. Only two of the sixteen, however, were affiliated with the *quartiere* of San Giovanni, *gonfalone* of the Drago, which included the *popolo* of San Salvatore where in 1400 the man being traced here dwelled (see n. 43 above; see also n. 58 below for this terminology). One of these the Catasto authorities declared "miserabile"; he seems not to be the individual once employed by the Misericordia (A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 79, fol. 475r). But the other, referred to as "Giovanni di Jacopo detto lasangnia," with a small family and taxable possessions including crop-producing parcels of land worth approximately 135 florins, is almost surely that person (A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 79, fol. 468r-v). Fifty-four years old in 1427 and by then living in the San Lorenzo parish (see n. 45 above), this Giovanni di Jacopo maintained his earlier connection with the parish of San Salvatore, paying rent to both the priest and the prior of that church. The Misericordia is not mentioned in his tax declaration.

[48] Saalman, *The Bigallo* 25 and accompanying notes, esp. 25 n. 52, 49-50 (doc. 9i); and John Henderson, "Charity in Late Medieval Florence: The Role of Religious Confraternities," in *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations (Acts of two conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1982 and 1984)*, eds. Sergio Bertelli, Nicolai Rubenstein, and Craig Hugh Smyth, vol. 2 (Florence: Villa I Tatti, 1989) 75-76, 83 n. 86. On the confraternal merger see nn. 6, 9 above.

[49] See n. 42 above.

[50] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 141v; see Appendix, doc. 1. Two light lines drawn diagonally across the page indicate the closing of this account.

[51] Again, see n. 60 below for Ambrogio's date of birth.

[52] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 316r; see Appendix, doc. 2.

[53] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 103v; see Appendix, doc. 3. The notice following the payment entry for 1380 reads: "Anne dato dj detto f[iorini] quattro d[' oro] I quali danarj ponem[m]o che ab[b]ia a[v]uto

Inop(?) o / ve dove[v]a avere ac[arta] 316 p[er] suo salario di ritenere fa[n]ciulli smarriti / Som[m]a apaghato la sop[r]adettapigione p[er] i[n]fino dj 1 dinove[m]bre 1380." The 1383 entry reads: "pagato per iii an[n]i detti e an[n]e (*sic*) istanti fior[ino] uno per an[n]o i[l]quale de[v]e [avere] come ap[p]are i[n] questo [libro] acar[ta] 316 / (illegible) questo che debbia fior[ini] iiii perlan[n]o e per suo salar[i]o no[n] de[v]e avere nulla."

[54] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 118v; see Appendix, doc. 4. Though the contract itself is undated, the page on which it appears bears the date 1383 at the top. Presumably each contract year began on 1 November, as according to the rental agreements of 1375 and 1390. The words "cinque doro" in the first sentence of the document, specifying the rental fee in florins, are actually crossed out; the reason for this is made clear by the text that follows. Several phrases appear after the final payment for 1390 that unfortunately are now totally illegible. They may have told of Mona Santina's ensuing demise, for which, see below.

[55] A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 138r; see Appendix, doc. 5. Though the inventory itself is undated, the previous folio bears the date 1389 at the top, and entries on the following page are from that same year.

[56] "Mona Santa moglie che fu di parigi Gualtieri figliuola che fu di Spoglia p[o]p[o]lo sa[n] Lorenzo" (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 722, fol. 87v, dated only 1348; but see also A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 723, fol. 74r, where the date is given as 2 July 1348); "Mona Santina mo[glie] dipuccio michele fre(?)ino p[o]p[o]lo santa maria alberighi" (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 723, fol. 61r, 23 May 1347); "Mona Santina mo[glie] che fu di bartolino talldj p[o]p[o]lo sanpiero mag[g]iore" (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 723, fol. 73v, 14 June 1348). Each of these testaments is followed by a notation with information pertinent to it that provides a *terminus ante quem* for the death of the testator: 18 July 1353, 13 October 1349, and 13 October 1355, respectively.

[57] The woman is identified only as "d[omi]na Sancta ux[or] oli[m] dominici tes[sitore]" (A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega [1351], vol. 306, fol. 45v). Three years later she is referred to as "d[omi]na Santa" (A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega [1354], vol. 307, fol. 82r). She resided in the *quartiere* of Santo Spirito, *gonfalone* of the Green Dragon (see the following note regarding this terminology).

[58] The suggestion, in other words, is that this Mo[na] Sancta and the man whose first name was Baldese—they were contemporaries—were both fathered by the same person named Torino; the latter, in turn, was the son of, or otherwise descended from, a man also named Baldese. Mo[na] Sancta d[i]torino is listed in A. S. F., Estimo, vol. 3, fol. 22v. Two other women named Sancta and Sanctina are included on the same page, another pair on fol. 22r, and one each on fols. 48r and 58r. Each is mentioned according to the neighborhood in which she resided, known as a *gonfalone*—a word that translates as "banner" in reference to the heraldic flag symbolizing the neighborhood. The four quarters (*quartieri*) of the city were each divided into four *gonfaloni*, which in turn were subdivided into parishes (*popoli*). See nn. 12, 43, 45, 47, 57, and 61. Though undated, the neat, legible handwriting appearing in this volume is of the sort that was current during the mid fourteenth century. Unfortunately, the complementary volumes for the other *quartieri* are apparently no longer extant. Three other small, surviving Estimo tomes catalogued as vols. 5, 5-bis, and 252, listing "miserabili" resident in various Florentine locales for the years 1369 and 1370, include no persons named Santa, Santina, or the like. The name of Baldese Turini baldesis appears in A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega (1351), vol. 306, fol. 122r and in A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega (1354), vol. 307, fol. 129r. Between 1355 and 1381 (Florentine style), the chronicler Marchionne di Coppo Stefani listed him among the priors of Florence three times, as *gonfaloniere di giustizia* twice, and eventually as a knight (*Cronaca fiorentina* 250 [rub. 672], 259 [rub. 687], 266 [rub. 699], 275 [rub. 721], 307 [rub. 774], 394 [rub. 902]). His knighthood was recorded, too, by the author of *Alle bocche della piazza* (20 [rub. 3]).

[59] Only four men with this name other than Baldese Turini baldesis are recorded in both the 1351 and 1354 tax records: see A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega, vol. 306, fols. 19v, 121v, 169r, 182v; and A. S. F., Estimo, Gabelle della Sega, vol. 307, fols. 71v, 128v, 160v, 170r. A fifth appears in the 1351 register only (vol. 306, fol. 176v). It is possible that some of these individuals were related. Confirming the fact that Baldese was an unusual name, Professor Joelle Rollo-Koster has found no person of that name among her lists of the numerous Italian residents of Avignon, France, seat of the papacy in the fourteenth century during the period of its so-called Babylonian Captivity. Similarly, and more telling, Professor Philip Gavitt has found no one named Baldese recorded among the consuls and *operai* of the Arte della Seta,

the Florentine guild legally in charge of the city's foundlings and therefore closely associated during the trecento and after with both the Ospedale di Santa Maria a San Gallo and the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, and subsequently with their successor, the Ospedale degli Innocenti (see Passerini, *Storia* 666, 671, 678-80, 685-86, 939-41 [doc. Z]). The author thanks both scholars for personally communicating these pieces of information.

[60] "A[m]bruog[i]o detto Qu[a]si dannj 75" (A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 78, fol. 221r). See also A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 48, fol. 212r. Vol. 48, fols. 210r-213r, lists the members of Ambrogio's household and their ages, their significant possessions and their values, and itemizes the family's credits and debits. Vol. 78, fols. 220v-221r, contains a summary of the information provided in vol. 48 and the tax assessment based upon it made by the communal tax officials.

[61] See n. 45 above for Ambrogio's residence in the *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion when his partnership ended. See also n. 58 above on this terminology. On neighborhood stability and cohesion in Florence during this period, see Kent, *Household and Lineage*, esp. 155-56, 172-73 for solidarity within single *gonfaloni*; and Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood*, esp. 6-22. While it is true that the very first extant documentary notice of Ambrogio di Baldese, recording his entrance into the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries (to which painters belonged) on 15 September 1372, places his residence in the parish of San Cristofano al Corso, more than likely this was a temporary situation, perhaps reflecting the young painter's recently concluded apprenticeship (about which there is no information). See Guidotti, "Ambrogio di Baldese" 133. In any case, San Cristofano al Corso parish is but a very short walk from the *gonfalone* of the Golden Lion as well as the Misericordia headquarters.

[62] Levin, "Advertising Charity." See also Levin, "A Lost Fresco Cycle," which expands upon aspects of the earlier study.

[63] See n. 34 above. For the texts of documents relating to Ambrogio's work for one of these corporate bodies, see most recently Diane Finiello Zervas, *Orsanmichele: Documents 1336-1452/Documenti 1336-1452*, Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali di Ferrara: Strumenti (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1996) 119 (doc. 280), 120 (doc. 281), 121 (doc. 286), 145 (doc. 354), 149-50 (doc. 362).

[64] For Ambrogio's real estate holdings, see A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 48, fol. 211r-v and A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 78, fol. 220v. The farm purchased in 1391 cost two hundred fifty florins, a substantial sum. This, incidentally, may help to explain the incongruity between Mona Santina's modest financial status, implied by her acceptance of the difficult and low-paying job at the Misericordia, and her brother Baldese Turini baldesis's considerable wealth, made clear in the mid-fourteenth-century Estimo records—assuming a family relationship did exist, that is. For Mona Santina's presumed share of the family fortune might have been entailed to her son and made available to him only at the time of her death in 1390. For Ambrogio's and ser Baldese's debtors, see A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 48, fol. 212r and A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 78, fol. 220v. One of Ambrogio's debtors was the painter Piero di Chellino, who owed him one florin each month for thirty-two months. Years later Piero di Chellino is known to have worked at the Misericordia/Bigallo. See, for example, Poggi, "Bigallo" 241 (doc. 2); and Saalman, *The Bigallo* 20-24, 52-53 (doc. 13).

[65] The members of Ambrogio's household, his creditors, and the objects he pawned are enumerated in A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 48, fol. 212r-v. The translated passages read in the original: "eb[b]elo inanzi[che] togliesse moglie," "mori gia sono tre an[n]j opiu," and "na[c]que dopo la mo[r]te del padre. La madre ladia abalia a capannoli p[re]sso al[l]anata p[er] lire sei ilmese e per nonavere ilmodo no[n]llo maj ricolto [le] resta avere fl. ve[n]tici[n]que e[n]tiera." See also A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 78, fols. 220v-221r.

[66] Ser Baldese's creditors and the objects he pawned are enumerated in A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 48, fols. 212v-213r. The translated passages naming creditors read in the original: "Il balio delsop[ra]detto michele fl. tre[n]ta o ci[r]ca," "Pratese dafegligne (*sic*) i[l] q[ue]llo di prato p[er] [il] resto di baliatico delsopradetto fra[n]cesco lir[e] dieci," "M[ona] chaterina vedova [che] sta i[n] [via] palaz[z]uolo i[n] prato p[er] [il] baliatico dello sop[ra]detto fa[n]ciullo lir[e] ventuna s[oldi] undici," and "dino calzolaio ino[r]to s[an]to michele p[er] [il] resto di baliatico delsop[ra]detto bartolomeo fl. uno." See also A. S. F., Catasto, vol. 78, fols. 220v-221r, where the sums he owed are sometimes stated in alternative fashion. The objects ser Baldese pawned included: a lined outer garment offered fourteen months prior to the declaration; four silver spoons and an enamelled sash traded about a year previous; his

wife's outer cloak, another sash with gold as well as a diamond and a sapphire adorning it, some red cloth, and another lined article of outer clothing, all exchanged for cash more recently.

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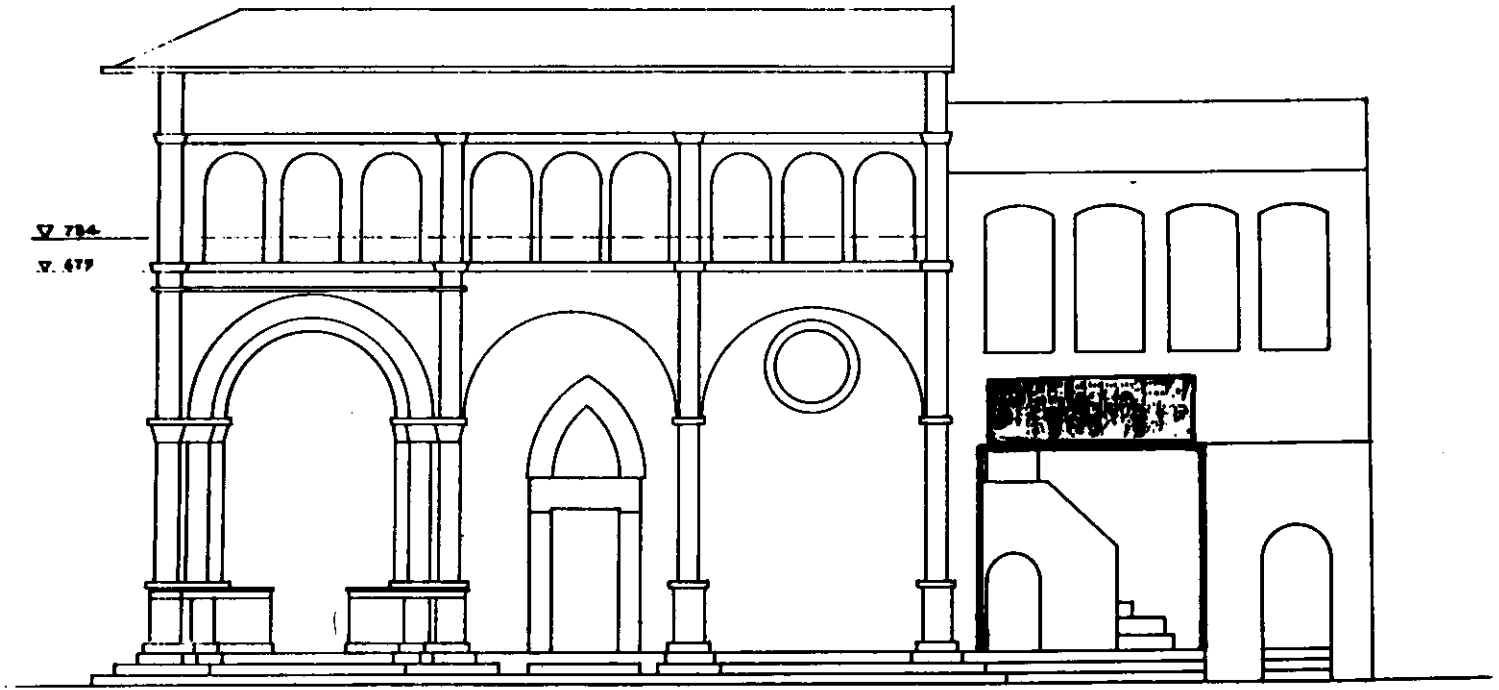
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Loggia, oratory, and residence of the Misericordia (now the Museo del Bigallo), Florence.(Photo: author.)

Ambrogio di Baldese and Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Consignment of Abandoned Children and Orphans to Natural and Adoptive Mothers*, 1386, Museo del Bigallo, Florence. (Photo: Soprintendenza per I Beni Artistici e Storici, Gabinetto Fotografico, Florence.)



Original elevation of the Misericordia, Florence. (Photo: Howard Saalman, *The Bigallo: The Oratory and Residence of the Compagnia del Bigallo e della Misericordia in Florence* [New York: New York University Press for The College Art Association of America, 1969], fig. 1 [with the addition of the Baldese-Gerini fresco inits original location and the residence doorway enhanced]. Courtesy of The Pennsylvania State University Press.

APPENDIX

Documents mentioning Mona Santina di Baldese

Document 1 (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 141v; 1 November 1390)
Ambruogio dibaldese efigliuolo dimo[na] santina chesta ne /
lla chasa dellacompagnia de[ve] dare p[er] pigione duno palcho /
chettiene dallacompagnia f[iorini] cinque d[' oro] lan[n]o da[i]qualj
siv[u]o /
le isbattere f[iorino] uno d[' oro] / il quale de[v]e avere ongni
an[n]o p[er] /
suo salar[i]o p[er] Ritenere ifanciugli ismar[r]iti / e p[er]cio
de[ve] /
dare diresto ongni an[n]o f[iorini] quattro d[' oro] lan[n]o /
Rifermo la /
detta pigione i chalendj nove[m]bre 1390 ecosi comincia lan[n]o /
levam[m]o ad[i]etro ove [è scritto che] detta mo[na] santina
de[ve]dare ad[i]etro /
allo 118 car[ta]
(A record of payments follows.)

Document 2 (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 316r; 15 September 1368)
Mona santina di baldese chesta nella chasa della chompangnia
de[ve]
avere ongni anno in chominciando a dj xv di settembre 1368
fior[ino]
uno doro i qualj danarj de[ve] avere per ritenere efanciulgli
isma[r]
riti per la detta chompangnia
(A record of payments follows.)

Document 3 (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 103v; 1 November 1375)
Mona santina di baldese che sta nella chasa della compangnia
tolse apigione il palcho sopra lentrata di questa chasa
per tempo etermine di cinque anni chominciati in chalendj
novembre annj MCCCLXXV per pregio di fior[ini] cinque per anno
(A record of payments follows.)

Document 4 (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 118v; 1 November[?]
1383)

[M]a d[onna] Santina di baldese chesta nella chas[a] della
co[m]pagnia de[v]e dare
per pigione duno palcho chetiene dal[l]a co[m]pagnia lan[n]o
fior[ini] cinque
doro come ap[p]are i[n] questo [volume] acar[ta] [1]0[3] de[i]quali
sivuole
[un] [t]estattore fior[ino] uno doro [i]lquale de[v]e [ave]re
ogni an[n]o per suo salar[i]o
[per] tenere i fanciulli ismarriti come ap[p]are i[n] questo
[volume] acar[ta] 316. e percio resta adare ogni an[n]o fior[ini]
quat[t]ro dor[o] lan[n]o
[H]A pagato per [il suo] sallar[i]o adj xiii° dinovembre
(A record of payments follows.)

Document 5 (A. S. F., Bigallo, vol. 724, fol. 138r; 1389)
Lacasa dellamis[er]icordia laquale abita mona sa
antina dassene dipigione fior[ini] iiij lan[n]o lava[n]zo
le Rimane p[er] lo ricettare de[i] fanciul[l]i _____fl. iiij